



MS&RP
NC MAIN STREET & RURAL PLANNING CENTER
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

PROMOTION

Positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.

Promotion | Role Within Main Street

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Promotion is:

- ♦ Communicating to the public in an attempt to influence the purchase of your products and/or services
- ♦ Used specifically to refer to a particular activity that is intended to promote the business, product or service
- ♦ As a word, an all inclusive term which could infer advertising and marketing
- ♦ Advertising is just one specific action taken to promote a product or service
- ♦ Inclusive of all the ways available to make a product/service known with the goal of increased revenue/positive economic impact

Three Types of Promotion

- ♦ Image
- ♦ Retail
- ♦ Special Events

Image:

- ♦ Image advertising promotes downtown's unique qualities and market position through print media, social media, website, radio, TV, direct mail
- ♦ Developing a branding and marketing campaign with good graphics and memorable tag line
- ♦ Collateral materials including a logo that is consistently used and repeated on all promotional products from T-shirts to public signage/wayfinding. *Note this logo may or may not be the downtown organization's logo. Some organizations use a more professional stylized logo for the organization
- ♦ Generating publicity with accurate, detailed and interesting press releases and timely communication with carefully cultivated media contacts
- ♦ Communicate the image through all media with image-building events such as: celebrating downtown's progress & successes with public displays and special events

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Retail (3 types):

- ♦ **Cooperative:** focuses on the comparative aspects of retailing in the district, clustering stores that are in the same category and can be promoted together
- ♦ **Cross:** groups business with complimentary goods and services in one retail event or in coordinated displays
- ♦ **Niche:** focuses attention not on the product mix, but on a specific consumer group targeted through specially distributed fliers, coupons, posters, media ads, social media, etc. Example: Military appreciation Day, Senior Day, target to a specific zip code, etc.

Special Events:

All special events should be authentic to your community and tied back to your downtown vision. There are usually three types of special events.

- ♦ **Community heritage:** acknowledges the inherent qualities of the community which can include local arts, industry, talent, agriculture or celebrate the history and architecture of the community
- ♦ **Special holidays:** focuses on traditional and non-traditional or even unconventional holidays celebrating dates or events that have meaning for the entire community or dates of special interest to a specific ethnic or cultural group
- ♦ **Social events:** develop unusual activities that enliven public spaces and attract people who don't frequent downtown

Resources: People, Funding & Time

People

- Identify people who can help
- Look to other organizations for potential volunteers
- ♦ Ask: Are you willing to make sacrifices for this project?

Funding

- Prioritize via Implementation Plan and budget for promotions
- Identify in-kind resources
- Create a sponsorship program
- Seek potential grant opportunities
- Consider a merchant participation fee
- Admission to event

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Time

- Always evaluate all resources to determine if promotional event, particularly a special event, will be beneficial (return on investment)
- Promotional programs/events should be a part of the annual implementation plan denoting the number of hours for each program/event including committee meetings
- Avoid adding new promotional actions/projects to the implementation plan once plan has been adopted
- Never add a promotion unless it ties back to the vision

Determining where to promote & target audience:

- Ask: is the promotion for local audience or for regional, state or national?
- Know your media options
- Build relationships with media and avoid buying from media that doesn't target your audience
- Buy what is best for the particular promotion
- Strategize over where to market and how to market
- Radio, TV & Print may offer some free ads if promotion is unique by allowing you/organization to go on air or story for print
- Billboards can be economical
- Always include social media
- Trade-outs/discounts & co-op buys are possibilities ask media reps

Typical Promotion Committee Projects could include, but not limited to the following and should be as unique as your community!

- ♦ Promotional calendar
- ♦ Business directory
- ♦ Image building campaign
- ♦ Holiday lighting/events/etc.
- ♦ Strategic retail events
- ♦ Retail tie-in to an existing special event and;
- ♦ Takes lead on branding development
- ♦ Coordinating training and education on topics relevant to promotions/marketing for the business community
- ♦ Co-sponsoring events with other organizations



This document was created to assist designated NC Main Street Communities and any other community that would like to develop best practices for downtown economic development.